CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for recognizing and playing a continuous streaming video data signal with no known beginning of data signal and no known end of data signal, the method comprising the steps of:

    a. Assigning an arbitrary beginning of data signal to the streaming video in mid-stream; and

    b. Assigning an arbitrary end of data signal to the streaming video for identifying the length of the video stream.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the continuous streaming video is time stamped and wherein the beginning of data signal is assigned by arbitrarily assigning a zero value to the first time stamp received.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the zero value is achieved by resetting each time stamp received time stamp with a value of the current time stamp minus first time stamp received, whereby the first time stamp received is set to zero and additional time stamps are counted from the first time stamp received.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the continuous streaming video is playable on a MicroSoft Media Player platform utilizing the arbitrary reset to zero step for the first time stamp received.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the end of data signal is set at a sufficiently high level to accommodate the functional life of the data signal.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the end of data signal is arbitrarily set at the highest number achievable by the player platform.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the continuous streaming video is playable on a MicroSoft Media Player platform having a 63-bit file length with variables settable at

either "0" or "1" and wherein all of the Media Player 63-bit file length variables are set to 1, thereby permitting a maximum file length of approximately thirty thousand years.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein an additional user plays a streaming video already in progress using an additional player, the method further comprising the steps of examining and modifying data being passed from the network and formulating an artificial beginning of data signal thereby by permitting an additional user to access the video already in progress by providing a recognizable beginning of file signal.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the encoded video signal may be viewed by more than one client, and wherein the streaming video signal is sent to a multicast group address for forwarding the stream only to known recipients, wherein a multicast routing technique is used for determining that multiple recipients are located on one specific network path or path segment, and wherein only one copy of the video signal is sent along that path.

10. The method of claim 9, including the step of assigning dual level addresses to the streaming video stream, whereby the recipient selects the video to be received, by first identifies the IP address of the desired source of the streaming video signal and then obtaining an appropriate file transfer protocol from the source.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the first address component is obtained using graphical methods.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the second address component is obtained by determining an appropriate file transfer protocol from the source the client obtains a small file from the desired encoder, using FTP, TFTP or other appropriate file transfer protocol over TCP/IP.